

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TRIEST 00048 121056Z

17

ACTION EUR-12

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R 120900Z JUN 75

FM AMCONSUL TRIESTE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0414

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMCONSUL ZAGREB

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

UNCLAS TRIESTE 0048

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, IT, YO

SUBJ: ITALO-YUGOSLAV RELATIONS AND THE JUNE 15 ELECTIONS

IN FRIULI-VENEZIA GIULIA.

REF.: TRIESTE 0046 (NOTAL)

1. ONE OF MOST STRIKING FEATURES OF CURRENT ELECTION CAMPAIGN
HERE IS THE VIRTUAL ABSENCE OF POLEMICS REVOLVING AROUND
EITHER ITALO-YUGOSLAV RELATIONS OR STATUS AND PROBLEMS OF
SLOVENE MINORITY. EVEN RIGHT-WING MSI WHICH IN PAST ELECTIONS
INVARIABLY SOUGHT TO ATTRACT VOTES BY PLAYING ON NATIONALISTIC
AND ANTI-SLAV THEMES, HAS BEEN REMARKABLY CAUTIOUS THIS YEAR,
AS WITNESS FAILURE OF ALMIRANTE TO TOUCH EITHER INTERNATIONAL
OR DOMESTIC ASPECTS OF THESE PROBLEMS IN HIS MAY 31 RALLY
HERE (REFTEL).

2. THIS CAUTION DOES NOT RESULT FROM ANY LACK OF QTE TARGETS
OF OPPORTUNITY UNQTE. STATEMENTS SUCH AS TITO S MAY 8
REFERENCES TO LIBERATION OF TRIESTE IN BELGRADE SPEECH WHICH
IN PAST MIGHT HAVE BEEN SEIZED UPON BY RIGHT-WING AS POSSIBLE
ANTI-YUGOSLAV RALLYING POINT, ELICITED NO PERCEPTIBLE REACTION
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PAGE 02 TRIEST 00048 121056Z

LOCALLY ALTHOUGH EXCERPTS FROM TITO S SPEECH WERE PUBLISHED

IN LOCAL PRESS. ALTHOUGH CONTROVERSIAL AT TIME, PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT SPONSORSHIP OF TRIESTE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON MINORITIES HAS NOT BECOME MAJOR CAMPAIGN ISSUE DESPITE FACT THAT ITS PRINCIPAL PROMOTER, DC PROVINCIAL PRESIDENT MICHELE ZANETTI IS CANDIDATE TO SUCCEED HIMSELF. HIS PARTY HAS GIVEN HIM FULL BACKING AND OBVIOUSLY CONSIDERS HIM ASSET TO PARTY, PARTICULARLY AMONG YOUTH (HE IS YOUNGEST PRESIDENT IN ITALY).

3. WITHIN SLOVENE ELECTORATE ITSELF, MOST OBSERVERS DOUBT THERE WILL BE MAJOR SHIFTS IN ALLEGIANCE, ALTHOUGH BALANCE BETWEEN PARTIES IN SLOVENE COMMUNES IS OFTEN SO DELICATE THAT SHIFT OF A FEW VOTES COULD CHANGE COMPOSITION OF COMMUNAL COUNCILS SIGNIFICANTLY. PARTICULAR ATTENTION IS BEEN PAID BY SLOVENE POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS TO INCREASING SLOVENE ETHNIC VOTE IN VALLI DEL NATISONE (UDINE PROVINCE) WHERE MINORITY SENTIMENT HAS TRADITIONALLY BEEN LESS STRONG.

4. COMMENT - WHILE VIRTUAL ABSENCE OF ANTI-YUGOSLAV AND SLOVENE POLEMICS CAN BE SEEN AS CONTINUATION OF A LONG-TERM, POST 1954 TREND WHICH HAS PICKED UP MOMENTUM SINCE THE MID-1960 S, THE ERUPTION OF THE ITALO-YUGOSLAV DISPUTE OVER TRIESTE IN 1974 AND THE SUBSEQUENT TENSIONS AND SHARP DROP IN BORDER CROSSINGS (WHICH IN PAST FEW MONTHS HAVE RESUMED THEIR HIGH PRE-1974 LEVELS) APPEARS TO HAVE HAD A SOBERING EFFECT ON COMPORTMENT OF POLITICAL PARTIES. ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF CRISIS WERE, PARADOXICALLY, FELT MOST STRONGLY BY MSI ELECTORATE WITH ITS HEAVY REPRESENTATION OF SMALL SHOPKEEPERS AND MERCHANTS. MSI'S COMPLETE POLITICAL ISOLATION LOCALLY FOLLOWING ALMIRANTE'S APRIL 1974 SPEECH FOLLOWED BY BOMBING OF SLOVENE SCHOOL ALSO APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN VIEWED AS DAMAGING TO PARTY BY LOCAL LEADERSHIP. WHILE MSI SHIFT IS OBVIOUSLY TACTICAL AND DOES NOT EXCLUDE A FUTURE RETURN TO ITS MORE TRADITIONAL POSITION, THE MODERATION SHOWN BY ALL SIDES IN THIS CAMPAIGN IS AN UNQUESTIONABLY A WELCOME DEVELOPMENT. RACKMALES

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